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FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0934
INFO RUEHUNV/USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA 0116

UNCLAS VIENTIANE 000159

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STATE FOR INL/AAE; INL C/CJ; INL/RM; INL/PC; EAP/MLS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: SNAR LA

SUBJECT: NAS VIENTIANE: REQUEST FOR GUIDANCE ON CONTINUING
FUNDING OF OPIUM ADDICTION TREATMENT

REF: A. 04 VIENTIANE 1242

- 1B. 04 STATE 243872
- 1C. 04 VIENTIANE 1291
- 1D. 04 STATE 254158

11. (U) This is an action request. Please see Paragraph 6.

12. (U) Under the direction of the Lao National Commission for Drug Control and Supervision's (LCDC) Programme Facilitation Unit (PFU), opium treatment programs in Laos reduced the addict population by more than 80% in 5 years, based on GOL surveys. Despite this achievement, approximately 8-12,000 addicts remain, and a 96% reduction in supply has driven the average opium price above \$500 per kilogram according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The GOL has reported that in some areas, prices can reach \$1,000 per kilogram. High prices and continuing demand will make eliminating the poppy cultivation that remains very difficult, and is a contributing factor in the apparent increase in production which the most recent UNODC opium survey observed.

13. (U) Further complicating the treatment of Laos' remaining opium addicts is that those who have not yet been treated are generally the most resistant to assistance. As the total population of addicts declines, those untreated who remain are the hard-core addicts least willing to participate in detoxification programs. Once convinced to do so, they require more care, greater follow-up, and more funding than the previous patients.

14. (U) Up to April of 2006, NAS Vientiane had two field advisors, one each in Luang Prahbang and Phongsaly, who were able to provide supervision and oversight for PFU opium treatment programs in the Lao-American Projects (LAP). The GOL treatment programs are conducted by the PFU, a joint UNODC/GOL entity that has been funded by the U.S. through UNODC. However, as a result of declining resources, the NAS no longer has advisors stationed outside Vientiane, and is not in a position to directly fund GOL treatment programs in these areas because we cannot provide continuous oversight. Under these circumstances, NAS recommends that future opium treatment should be funded through UNODC Vientiane, which operates opium treatment programs jointly with the PFU and is able to provide both appropriate oversight and accountability. If INL authorizes this method of support, the NAS would insure that U.S. funded opium detoxification conducted by UNODC/PFU includes post-detoxification rehabilitation, but excludes harm reduction activities.

15. (U) NAS Vientiane has an unliquidated balance of approximately \$117,000 subobligated for opium addict treatment.

¶6. (U) NAS requests INL authorization for the funding of PFU (host nation) opium addiction treatment programs through UNODC Vientiane, and requests INL guidance on how this might best be done.

¶7. (U) POC for this request is Narcotics Affairs Director Clifford Heinzer, HeinzerCD@state.gov, IVG 586-7013/7128.
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